

Voluntary Pre-K Updates

June 29, 2017

2017 Allotments and Spending

As of June 29, 2017, the VPK budget is showing a pull-down rate of 83 percent of total budget. This is a gentle reminder to make your final budget adjustments and pull down your funding allotments. We understand final pull down is not possible until teachers are paid for the last cycle in June. However, we also want to remind you that money cannot be carried over from year to year.

2018 Applications and ePlan

Scores and Feedback

You may remember that we announced during ELM 3 that we would be providing specific, narrative feedback to all districts regarding your 2018 applications and scores. The timeline given at that meeting was September 1. We want to confirm that you will be receiving this feedback, and we anticipate it will come earlier than originally communicated. A lot of work went into those applications, and we want to ensure that you receive quality feedback.

Budget Updates Pending

Our finance department is currently updating VPK budgets to reflect the awards that were emailed in May. Once all allocations are up to date, your 2018 application will be returned to you. **It will be returned with the status “unapproved.”** Each district should take a final look at your state and local budgets to ensure all aspects are up to date. When you are updating your budgets, please adhere to the following guidelines:

1. Every line item must have specific information regarding expenditures.
 - a. Teachers and staff salaries, insurance, social security, etc. – Please note number of employees and their role.
 - b. Indirect cost – Please give general information about how this money will be utilized.
 - c. Instructional supplies – Please list amount per classroom and types of materials to be purchased.
 - d. Other supplies and materials – Please list out what those items are and how many classrooms are affected.
 - e. Plans to purchase or repair playground equipment, furniture, and building maintenance should be specific and must be in direct correlation to the service of VPK students.

2. Moving forward, **any revision to the budget after preliminary approval should be noted.** Do not change the original narrative; notate the revision and number it. For example, if the district hires teachers at a lower rate of pay than anticipated, money may be moved from the salary line to the other equipment line. This should be noted under each category as in the example below:
 - a. **116 – Teachers** – Revision 1) District is moving \$2,000 from teacher salary due to change of staff and rate of pay.
 - b. **790 – Other Equipment** – Revision 1) District is moving \$2,000 to other equipment for purchase of tables to replace damaged tables in two VPK classrooms.

TN ELDS and Curriculum List

Over the course of the 2017-18 school year, the office of early learning (OEL) will be working on two initiatives that will impact the curricula and instructional practices in your pre-K classrooms.

TN ELDS

During the summer and fall of 2017, we will be working to realign our Tennessee Early Learning and Developmental Standards (TN ELDS) to the new K-12 Tennessee Academic Standards. We anticipate that this will result in minimal changes to the content of the TN ELDS and are hoping this realignment process will go quickly. Multiple opportunities to solicit feedback from teachers and leaders will be provided. We hope to have this realignment completed for review by the State Board of Education this fall.

Revised Curriculum List

Subsequent to the TN ELDS realignment process, we will engage in a review process for the approved list of curricula for use in VPK classrooms. We anticipate that this review and revision process will occur after the TN ELDS realignment and will involve both content experts and stakeholder input. We anticipate having a revised curriculum list available Spring 2018 for implementation during the 2018-19 school year.

Training and Convenings

As we collaborate with you to strengthen our VPK programs across the state, we plan to reinstate our VPK director convenings. We are planning our first VPK Director Convening for the fall in a one-day format scheduled in the three grand divisions.

In addition, we will be continuing the professional development started during the 2016-17 school year. We anticipate “ELM Phase II” will take place throughout the school year. This will consist of a series of four (4) one-day sessions over the course of the school year. Similar to this year, you will be asked to bring an early childhood leadership team to the meetings. This team should include your VPK director, at least one teacher, and at least one principal or supervisor. We are excited about the content and looking forward to seeing you all again!

2019 Applications

Based on your feedback from the recent application cycle, we will continue to refine this process. We are considering a revised timeline that would start in January 2018, with funding decisions made by April 2018. This revised timeline will enable you to make important budget and personnel decisions prior to the end of the school year. We will also continue to refine the application itself in order to streamline the process and meet the expectations of a competitive process.

Scope of Services and Attendance Policy

Attached to this email, you will find the updated scope of services and attendance policy. Please read them carefully and sign the general assurances located in ePlan. There have been a few changes to the scope of services this year. In addition to updating all legal references to the updated Standards for School Administered Child Care Programs Rule, we have outlined some requirements a little more specifically. Please note the following sections:

1. Student Eligibility

- a. While the tiers for enrollment have remained the same, we have been more specific with regard to addressing four year olds first.
- b. There are new requirements for getting approval for three year olds to enroll.

2. Staffing

- c. Ratios stated are for classrooms with four year olds.
- d. Language was added to include teaching assistants with a technical certificate. This is more rigorous training than a CDA.
- e. Requirements for job-embedded professional development was specified.
- f. Student growth portfolio requirements were added.
- g. Specificity regarding employment rights for VPK teachers in community based agencies was clarified.

3. Enrollment/Attendance/ EIS Data Collection

- h. New attendance policy is referenced.
- i. Enrollment of students in community agencies was made more specific.

4. Transportation

- j. Requirement for adult to adult transfer at all times was added.

5. Performance Measures

- k. Measures have been made more specific.

Contact Information

As always, if you have any questions or concerns regarding Voluntary Pre-K, please contact Candace (Candi) Cook at Candace.Cook@tn.gov. You may also reach Candi at (615) 741-9051 or (615) 490-5061.